

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
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AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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USDA FOR K.O. STEPHENS/CEP/OGSM
BELGRADE FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EEWT, RO
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN REQUEST FOR CCC CREDIT FOR FEED GRAINS

REF: (A) STATE 204181, (B) BUCHAREST 5590

1. ON AUGUST 15, EMBOFF MET WITH NISTOR ARDELEANU FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND MIHAI TOMESCU OF AGROEXPORT FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATION TO DISCUSS NEED FOR SUBMISSION OF STATISTICAL DATA IN SUPPORT OF RECENT GOR CCC REQUEST. ARDELEANU GAVE ASSURANCE THAT COMPLETE DATA AS SPECIFIED PARA 4, REFTTEL A, WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN TIMELY FASHION. ON FOLLOWING DAY, ILIE MARGINEANU, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AT MINAG, ADVISED EMBOFF THAT REQUIRED DATA WERE ALREADY BEING GATHERED AND WOULD BE SUBMITTED BY AUGUST 25. DATA WILL BE SENT DIRECTLY TO GOR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON FOR FORMAL PRESENTATION TO USDA. COPY WILL BE PROVIDED TO EMBASSY. WE WILL ADVISE DEPT AND USDA UPON OUR RECEIPT OF THESE DATA.
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2. IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES CONCERNING REASON FOR UNUSUALLY LARGE REQUEST FOR CORN IMPORTS, AGROEXPORT AND MINAG OFFICIALS REPLIED THAT CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR THIS YEAR'S CORN CROP WERE NOT ENCOURAGING DUE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS PREVAILING IN SOUTHERN COUNTIES OF TELEORMAN, ILFOV AND IALOMITA (SEE COMMENT BELOW).

MARGINEANU EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT THIS QUANTITY OF CORN WAS NEEDED TO INSURE STEADY SUPPLY OF QUALITY FEED FOR PORT UNITS. HE SAID THAT IN PAST, QUALITY OF ROMANIAN PORK PRODUCTS HAS SUFFERED GREATLY DUE TO LACK OF BALANCED DIET. PROBLEMS HAVE RESULTED FROM SUBSTITUTION OF VARIOUS FORMS OF POOR FEED PRODUCTS WHEN FEED CORN SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. NO PLANS TO IMPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF PIGS IN 1978-79 WE MENTIONED.

3. COMMENT. WE DOUBT INFORMATION THAT CORN HARVEST IS IN JEOPARDY. ON THE CONTRARY, EXCEPT FOR MARGINEANU AND TOMESCU COMMENTS, ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THOSE AT HIGHEST LEVELS, INDICATES THAT HARVEST PROSPECTS RANGE FROM GOOD TO EXCELLENT. ALTHOUGH LACK OF RAIN HAS BEEN REPORTED FOR LAST FEW WEEKS IN EXTREME SOUTHERN REGIONS, REPORTS OF VISUAL OBSERVATIONS BY EMBOFFS AND SEVERAL VISITING AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS CONFIRM THAT CORN CROP APPEARS TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION. OF COURSE, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT CROP COULD SOMEHOW DETERIORATE SINCE CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME REMAINS BEFORE OCTOBER HARVEST.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT SECOND REASON CITED BY MARGINEANU CONCERNING ANIMAL DIET IS MORE RELEVANT TO CURRENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPORT PLANS. EXPORT OF MEAT PRODUCTS HAS BECOME SIGNIFICANT HARD CURRENCY EARNER FOR ROMANIA. GOR HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS TO EXPAND EXPORTS TO WEST AND MIDDLE EAST BY MORE THAN 100 PERCENT OVER COURSE OF CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN. FOR U.S. MARKET ALONE, EXPORTS OF CANNED HAMS ARE SLATED TO REACH \$100 MILLION BY 1980. IN VIEW OF THESE PLANS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT QUALITY OF MEAT PRODUCTS CONFORMS TO HIGHEST STANDARDS.

5. IN RECENT MONTHS, WE HAVE HEARD NUMBER OF REPORTS OF CONTRACT CANCELLATIONS BY FOREIGN BUYERS DUE TO POOR QUALITY OF GOR EXPORTS. ONE UNCONFIRMED REPORT STATED THAT ENTIRE SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN SUCEAVA COUNTY, WHOSE OUTPUT IS USUALLY DESTINED FOR FOREIGN MARKETS, WAS IDLE BECAUSE NO ACCEPTABLE BEEF COULD BE LOCATED. FURTHER, BRIAN WELLS OF RALSTON PURINA REPORTED THAT DURING RECENT VISIT TO 150 THOUSAND PIG UNIT IN GIURGIU, HERD SHOWED CLEAR SIGNS OF POOR FEEDING.

6. WELLS ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOR HAD PLANS TO PLACE 2 MILLION PIGS IN IALOMITA AND TIMISOARA COUNTIES ON SPECIAL HIGH-NOURISHMENT DIET FOR 1979.

IF THIS INFORMATION IS CORRECT, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE
AN ADEQUATE EXPLANATION FOR SIZE OF CCC REQUEST. TO
DATE, WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY INFORMATION THAT
WOULD INDICATE THAT GOR HAS PLANS TO TRANSSHIP ANY
PORTION OF CORN IMPORTS. END COMMENT.
AGGREY

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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition History: n/a
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